

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A control apparatus for controlling an intake air
2 quantity to the engine by varying an intake valve closing
3 timing of the engine, the control apparatus comprising:
4 a controller configured
5 to calculate a target air quantity in accordance with
6 an engine operating state,
7 to calculate an estimated internal EGR quantity of the
8 engine in accordance with the engine operating state,
9 to calculate a target intake valve closing timing in
10 accordance with the target air quantity and the estimated
11 internal EGR quantity, and
12 to control an actual intake air quantity to the engine
13 by controlling an actual intake valve closing timing of the
14 engine to achieve the target intake valve closing timing.

1 2. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein
2 the controller is configured to calculate the estimated
3 internal EGR quantity in accordance with a target exhaust
4 valve closing timing for the engine and an engine speed of
5 the engine.

1 3. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 2, wherein
2 the controller is configured to calculate a base internal EGR
3 quantity in accordance with the target exhaust valve
4 closing timing and the engine speed, and to determine the
5 estimated internal EGR quantity by modifying the base
6 internal EGR quantity with an overlap correction quantity
7 determined in accordance with a valve overlap condition of
8 the engine.

1 4. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein
2 the controller is configured to determine a valve overlap
3 quantity in accordance with an interval between a target

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4 intake valve opening timing and the target exhaust valve
5 closing timing, and to determine the estimated internal EGR
6 quantity by addition of the overlap correction quantity to
7 the base internal EGR quantity.

1 5. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein
2 the controller is configured to increase the base internal
3 EGR quantity with increase in an interval from one of an
4 exhaust top dead center and the target exhaust valve
5 closing timing to the other.

1 6. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein
2 the controller is configured to increase the base internal
3 EGR quantity as the engine speed increases when the
4 target exhaust valve closing timing is before an exhaust
5 top dead center.

1 7. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein
2 the controller is configured to decrease the base internal
3 EGR quantity as the engine speed increases when the
4 target exhaust valve closing timing is after an exhaust top
5 dead center.

1 8. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein
2 the controller is configured to increase the estimated
3 internal EGR quantity by increasing the overlap correction
4 quantity with increase in the valve overlap quantity
5 representing a valve overlap period.

1 9. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein
2 the controller is configured to calculate the estimated
3 internal EGR quantity by decreasing the overlap correction
4 quantity with increase in a retard of the target exhaust
5 valve closing timing from an exhaust top dead center when

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6 the target exhaust valve closing timing is after the exhaust
7 top dead center.

1 10. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, wherein
2 the controller is configured to increase the estimated
3 internal EGR quantity by increasing the overlap correction
4 quantity with increase in an absolute value of an intake
5 pressure on a negative pressure side.

1 11. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, wherein
2 the controller is configured to calculate the overlap
3 correction quantity by modifying a base correction quantity
4 determined by the valve overlap quantity, with an intake
5 pressure modification quantity determined in accordance
6 with an intake pressure and the target exhaust valve
7 closing timing.

1 12. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein
2 the controller is configured to determine the valve overlap
3 quantity by converting a valve overlap angular interval
4 expressed as an angular distance in crankshaft rotation to
5 a valve overlap time period.

1 13. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein
2 the controller is configured to determine an intermediate
3 quantity in accordance with the valve overlap quantity, to
4 set the base correction quantity equal to the intermediate
5 quantity when the target exhaust valve closing timing is
6 before an exhaust top dead center, and to determine the
7 base correction quantity by subtraction from the
8 intermediate quantity, of a subtrahend proportional to a
9 retard quantity of the exhaust valve closing timing with
10 respect to the exhaust top dead center when the target
11 exhaust valve closing timing is after the exhaust top dead
12 center.

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1 14. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein
2 the controller is configured to determine a modification
3 coefficient, as the modification quantity, in accordance with
4 the intake pressure, the target exhaust valve closing timing
5 and the valve overlap quantity; and wherein the controller
6 is configured to calculate the overlap correction quantity by
7 multiplying the base correction quantity by the modification
8 coefficient.

1 15. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 11, wherein
2 the controller is configured to increase the modification
3 quantity as an absolute value of the intake pressure
4 increases on a negative side, and to increase the
5 modification quantity in accordance with a retard quantity
6 of the exhaust valve closing timing from an exhaust top
7 dead center when the exhaust valve closing timing is after
8 the exhaust top dead center and the absolute value of the
9 intake pressure is higher than a predetermined level.

1 16. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, wherein
2 the controller is programmed to determine the estimated
3 internal EGR quantity by addition, to the base internal EGR
4 quantity, of an overlap increase correction quantity which
5 is increased as the valve overlap quantity increases; and
6 wherein the controller is programmed to modify the base
7 internal EGR quantity with the overlap increase correction
8 quantity when the target exhaust valve closing timing is
9 after the target intake valve opening timing, and to set the
10 estimated internal EGR quantity equal to the base internal
11 EGR quantity when the target exhaust valve closing timing
12 is not after the target intake valve opening timing.

1 17. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 16, wherein
2 the controller is programmed to increase the base internal

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3 EGR quantity with increase in an advance of the exhaust
4 valve closing timing from the exhaust top dead center when
5 the exhaust valve closing timing is before the exhaust top
6 dead center, and to increase the base internal EGR quantity
7 with increase in a retard of the exhaust valve closing
8 timing from the exhaust top dead center when the exhaust
9 valve closing timing is after the exhaust top dead center;
10 and wherein the controller is programmed to determine the
11 overlap increase correction quantity in accordance with the
12 valve overlap quantity, the target exhaust valve closing
13 timing and an intake pressure controlled by a throttle valve.

1 18. The control apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein
2 the control apparatus further comprises a variable valve
3 timing actuator comprising a solenoid to vary the actual
4 intake valve closing timing in response to an electric
5 control signal produced by the controller, and a sensor
6 system to sense engine operating conditions to determine
7 the engine operating state.

1 19. A method for an engine, the method comprising:
2 obtaining information on an exhaust valve closing
3 timing, an intake valve opening timing and an engine
4 speed; and
5 calculating an estimated internal EGR quantity of the
6 engine in accordance with the exhaust valve closing timing,
7 the intake valve opening timing and the engine speed.

1 20. The method as claimed in Claim 19, wherein, as the
2 exhaust valve closing timing, a target exhaust valve closing
3 timing is used for calculating the estimated internal EGR
4 quantity.

1 21. The method as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the
2 method is an internal EGR quantity estimating method; and

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3 wherein the method further comprises calculating a base
4 internal EGR quantity in accordance with the exhaust valve
5 closing timing and the engine speed; and the estimated
6 internal EGR quantity is set equal to the base internal EGR
7 quantity without modification when there is no valve
8 overlap between an exhaust valve opening period and an
9 intake valve opening period, and the estimated internal
10 EGR quantity is determined by modifying the base internal
11 EGR quantity with a valve overlap condition of the engine
12 when there is a valve overlap.

1 22. The method as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the
2 method further comprises calculating an overlap correction
3 quantity in accordance with the overlap condition; and the
4 estimated internal EGR quantity is determined by addition
5 of the overlap correction quantity to the base internal EGR
6 quantity when there is a valve overlap between the exhaust
7 valve opening period and the intake valve opening period.

1 23. The method as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the base
2 internal EGR quantity is increased with increase in an
3 interval from one of an exhaust top dead center and the
4 exhaust valve closing timing to the other.

1 24. The method as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the base
2 internal EGR quantity is increased as the engine speed
3 increases when the exhaust valve closing timing is before
4 an exhaust top dead center.

1 25. The method as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the base
2 internal EGR quantity is decreased as the engine speed
3 increases when the exhaust valve closing timing is after an
4 exhaust top dead center.

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1 26. The method as claimed in Claim 22, wherein the
2 estimated internal EGR quantity is increased by increasing
3 the overlap correction quantity with increase in a valve
4 overlap quantity between the exhaust valve opening period
5 and the intake valve opening period.

1 27. The method as claimed in Claim 22, wherein the
2 estimated internal EGR quantity is decreased by decreasing
3 the overlap correction quantity with increase in a retard of
4 the exhaust valve closing timing from an exhaust top dead
5 center when the exhaust valve closing timing is after the
6 exhaust top dead center.

1 28. The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein the
2 estimated internal EGR quantity is increased by increasing
3 the overlap correction quantity with increase in an absolute
4 value of an intake pressure on a negative pressure side.

1 29. The method as claimed in Claim 22, wherein the
2 method further comprises calculating a base correction
3 quantity in accordance with a valve overlap quantity; and
4 calculating an intake pressure modification quantity in
5 accordance with an intake pressure and the exhaust valve
6 closing timing; and the overlap correction quantity is
7 determined by modifying the base correction quantity with
8 the intake pressure modification quantity.

1 30. The method as claimed in Claim 26, wherein the valve
2 overlap quantity is determined by converting a valve
3 overlap angular interval expressed as an angular distance
4 in crankshaft rotation to a valve overlap time period.

1 31. The method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein the
2 method further comprises determining an intermediate

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3 quantity in accordance with the valve overlap quantity;
4 setting the base correction quantity equal to the
5 intermediate quantity when the exhaust valve closing
6 timing is before an exhaust top dead center; and
7 determining the base correction quantity by subtraction
8 from the intermediate quantity, of a subtrahend
9 proportional to a retard quantity of the exhaust valve
10 closing timing with respect to the exhaust top dead center
11 when the exhaust valve closing timing is after the exhaust
12 top dead center.

1 32. The method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein an intake
2 pressure modification coefficient is determined, as the
3 intake pressure modification quantity, in accordance with
4 the intake pressure, the exhaust valve closing timing and
5 the valve overlap quantity; and wherein the overlap
6 correction quantity is calculated by multiplying the base
7 correction quantity by the intake pressure modification
8 coefficient.

1 33. The method as claimed in Claim 29, wherein the
2 intake pressure modification quantity is increased as an
3 absolute value of the intake pressure increases on a
4 negative side, and the intake pressure modification
5 quantity is increased in accordance with a retard quantity
6 of the exhaust valve closing timing from an exhaust top
7 dead center when the exhaust valve closing timing is after
8 the exhaust top dead center and the absolute value of the
9 intake pressure is higher than a predetermined level.

1 34. The method as claimed in Claim 19 wherein the
2 method is an engine cylinder intake air quantity calculating
3 method, and the method further comprises:
4 calculating an engine cylinder intake air quantity in
5 accordance with the estimated internal EGR quantity.

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1 35. The method as claimed in Claim 34, wherein the
2 method further comprises calculating a cylinder air volume
3 quantity in accordance with the estimated internal EGR
4 quantity and a cylinder volume calculated from the intake
5 valve closing timing; the engine cylinder intake air quantity
6 is an engine cylinder intake air mass quantity which is the
7 mass of air inducted into a cylinder section of the engine;
8 and the engine cylinder intake air mass quantity is
9 calculated in accordance with the cylinder air volume
10 quantity, an intake manifold air mass quantity and an
11 intake manifold volume.

1 36. The method as claimed in Claim 35, further
2 comprising calculating the intake manifold air mass
3 quantity by calculating a balance between an intake
4 manifold inflow air mass quantity which is the mass of air
5 flowing into an intake manifold section of the engine, and
6 an intake manifold outflow air mass quantity which is the
7 mass of air flowing out of the intake manifold section.

1 37. The method as claimed in Claim 19, wherein the
2 method is an engine control method, and the method
3 further comprises:
4 controlling the engine in accordance with the
5 estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 38. The method as claimed in Claim 37, wherein the
2 method is an engine ignition timing control method, and
3 ignition timing of the engine is controlled in accordance
4 with the estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 39. The method as claimed in claim 38, further
2 comprising:

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3 calculating a residual gas ratio in accordance with the
4 estimated internal EGR quantity, the residual gas ratio
5 being a mass ratio of a residual gas quantity to a total
6 cylinder gas quantity;
7 calculating a combustion speed in accordance with the
8 residual gas ratio;
9 calculating a combustion reaction time from a start of
10 ignition to a peak of a combustion pressure, in accordance
11 with the combustion speed; and
12 calculating a maximum torque producing ignition
13 timing in accordance with the combustion reaction time, to
14 control an actual ignition timing of the engine to achieve
15 the maximum torque producing ignition timing.

1 40. The method as claimed in Claim 37, wherein the
2 method is an engine valve timing control method, and an
3 intake valve closing timing of the engine is controlled in
4 accordance with the estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 41. The method as claimed in Claim 40, wherein the
2 intake valve closing timing is controlled in accordance with
3 the estimated internal EGR quantity and a target intake air
4 quantity calculated in accordance with an engine operating
5 state.

1 42. An apparatus comprising:
2 an internal EGR quantity estimating section to
3 calculate an estimated internal EGR quantity of an engine
4 in accordance with an exhaust valve closing timing, an
5 intake valve opening timing and an engine speed of the
6 engine.

1 43. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 42, wherein the
2 apparatus is an engine cylinder intake air quantity
3 estimating apparatus; and the apparatus further comprises:

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4 an engine cylinder intake air quantity estimating
5 section to calculate an engine cylinder intake air quantity in
6 accordance with the estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 44. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 42, wherein the
2 apparatus is an engine control apparatus; and the
3 apparatus further comprises:

4 a controlling section to control the engine in
5 accordance with the estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 45. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 44, wherein the
2 controlling section is configured to control an ignition
3 timing of the engine in accordance with the estimated
4 internal EGR quantity.

1 46. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 44, wherein the
2 controlling section is configured to control an intake valve
3 closing timing of the engine in accordance with the
4 estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 47. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 46, wherein the
2 apparatus further comprises a target air quantity
3 calculating section to calculate a target air quantity in
4 accordance with an engine operating state, and the
5 controlling section is configured to control the intake valve
6 closing timing in accordance with the target air quantity
7 and the estimated internal EGR quantity.

1 48. An apparatus for an engine, the apparatus
2 comprising:
3 means for collecting information on an exhaust valve
4 closing timing, an intake valve opening timing and an
5 engine speed of the engine; and

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6 means for calculating an estimated internal EGR
7 quantity of the engine in accordance with the exhaust valve
8 closing timing, the intake valve opening timing and the
9 engine speed.

1 49. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 48, further
2 comprising means for controlling an engine operating
3 parameter of the engine in accordance with the estimated
4 internal EGR quantity.

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